DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 967 JC 970 036

AUTHOR Thot, Iris Dolores
TITLE Community College Students and Foreign Languages: Making the Match.
PUB DATE [96]
NOTE 40p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Correlation; *Educational Needs; Enrollment Influences; Role of Education; *Second Language Learning; Second Languages; *Student Attitudes; *Student Motivation; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the primary reasons that community college students enrolled in foreign language classes. Surveys were distributed to 61 students in 6 German and Spanish language classes at California's Chaffey Community College, requesting information on their motivation for enrolling in the class, level of satisfaction, and general attitudes regarding needs for foreign language instruction in the United States. Study findings, based on responses from all 61 students, included the following: (1) 31.1% of the students indicated that they were taking a foreign language because it was their major, while 54.1% said that they were taking it for pleasure; (2) 26.2% indicated that they were taking the language class to be more attractive on the job market, while another 14.8% cited job advancement; (3) 95.1% indicated that they enjoyed their class; (4) 65.6% rated their teachers as excellent, 21.3% as very good, 6.6% as good, and 1.6% as fair; and (5) 52.5% strongly agreed that every U.S. child should study a foreign language, while 23% strongly agreed with the statement that if more people learned a foreign language there would be less war. Finally, significant correlations were found between students who indicated that they were taking a foreign language to make more money and for pleasure, between those studying a language for prestige and for job advancement, and between those taking the language for money and for job advancement. Contains 18 references. The survey instrument is appended. (HAA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: JC

In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. FL

ED 402 967

Community College Students and Foreign Languages: Making the Match

by

Iris Dolores Thot

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

I. Thot

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JC 970 036

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Community College Students and Foreign Languages: Making the Match

Introduction

The following study concerns students at the community college level, and what brings them to the foreign language classroom. Throughout my seven-year tenure as a foreign language teacher I have had the opportunity to instruct at all levels. I served as a FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) teacher in German for second graders at a summer program sponsored by Concordia College in Moorehead, Minnesota; I taught two years of high school German and Spanish; I taught German at the University of California, Davis. Presently I teach German part-time at Chaffey Community College in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

The community college setting is unique, because it offers the instructor a wonderful mix of older students going back to school, bright-eyed youth straight out of high school, and successful business people who want to enrich their careers and their personal lives. Due to the heterogeneous quality of the community college scene, I became very interested in just what it is which brings each individual two year college student to the foreign language classroom. My curiosity on this issue subsequently grew into a research project.

Significance of the Research

The research question which was my guiding light throughout the study was the following: **What factors (external/internal) motivate students at the community college level to study a**

foreign language? There are various sub questions which flow out of that research question such as:

a) Do the students study a foreign language because they need it for their major and/or other credits?

b) Do they study a foreign language so that they will be more successful on the job market?

c) Do students study a foreign language because they would like to make a difference in the world?

d) Do the students study a foreign language simply to satisfy something within themselves, i.e. for pleasure, travel, or just for fun?

The significance of the research and sub questions is that Americans still lag far behind the rest of the world in terms of global knowledge and foreign language competency; if we are to retain our expertise in international business and technology, we must take the study of foreign languages seriously. As a community college educator, I feel that getting behind the reasons why our students enroll in foreign language classes is the key to improving and re-formulating the offerings that we have so that more individuals will enroll in the future.

For example, if my research were to show that the majority of students were taking my German class for necessary units, I would try to make my class the most interesting and enjoyable I could make it, since students aren't in there of their true own volition. If my study showed a large group of students with a predilection towards taking the class because they wanted to make a difference in the world, I would tend to structure

the class in a way which emphasized ethnic minorities in Germany and the efforts to integrate them, Germany's involvement in the United Nations and in various peace-keeping efforts around the world, and the post-World War democratic constitution of the Federal Republic.

If my research revealed a preponderance of students enrolling in foreign language because they find it enjoyable, or because they'd like to use it for recreational activities such as travel, I would naturally structure the class so that an emphasis would be on situations which a tourist would find useful, i.e., how to order in a restaurant, how to ask for directions, how to ask for a hotel room, how to buy a train ticket, etc.

Finally, if I were to discover through my research that a large number of students took foreign language classes because they wished for job advancement in their present jobs, or desired a future job in the international arena, I would avidly teach a more business-oriented curriculum. Business German is a main-stay at most four year colleges and universities, but is a non-entity at the two year level. Students interested in international business opportunities would doubtless regard the business lingo of any language to be a great asset.

Educators of all levels and all fields have learned that if the "clients" (the students!) are happy, they will return more readily for more! Foreign language instructors have a special mission: to insure that our students learn what they need to represent the United States abroad. With America's past

poor record in foreign language competency, we can't afford to send out any more duds. Ascertaining what it is that the students are interested in and then teaching it, will assure for happier "customers" in the future, and in greater numbers. The great significance of this research project is to find out how students at the community college level are responding to the present system of foreign language instruction, what they would like to see changed, and what they hope to get out of their foreign language experience. It is only in this way - by asking our students, that I see it possible to expand and ameliorate the present situation of foreign language instruction in the United States; for what we do affects not only our nation, but the entire world.

Literature Review

No research study in the field of foreign language would be complete without delving into the literature. Several of the works I looked into dealt with the rather sad state of foreign languages in America. Nothing could get more to the point than the Report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. This commission, chaired by James A. Perkins under then President Carter, stated in 1979 that the problem of foreign language illiteracy in our country "extends from our elementary schools, where instruction in foreign languages ... has virtually disappeared .... Such specific educational neglect, moreover, is reflected in public uncertainty about the relationship between American interests and goals and those of other peoples and other cultures"

(Perkins, 1979, p. 457).

Perkins' commission stated several other depressing facts of the state of foreign language instruction in our country, for example that there are tens of thousands of English-speaking Japanese business representatives on assignment in the United States, but that, on the flip side, there are only a handful of Japanese-speaking Americans working in Japan. Also, that "the foreign affairs agencies of the U.S. government are deeply concerned that declining foreign language enrollments in our schools and colleges will lower the quality of new recruits for their services and will increase language training costs" (Perkins, 1979, p. 458).

The most alarming fact, however, is that nothing much seems to have changed form the date that this report was written. Having taught at the high school level for two years, I find it appalling that we wait, as a whole, until age fifteen or sixteen to educate children in a foreign language, when research studies have repeatedly proven that the younger the child, the easier it is to learn. Quite a few of my community college students have also revealed to me the fact that they think foreign languages as a priority do not receive the same attention as other subjects such as math and english, since both of these subjects are mandatory in K - 12 education, but foreign language instruction is not.

A suitable companion to the Perkins report is the article by Renate A. Schulz, Searching for Life After Death: In the Aftermath of the President's Commission on Foreign Language

and International Studies. Writing in 1981, Schulz reports a "considerable increase in public awareness of the deficiencies in foreign language competence in the United States and the possible effects of those deficiencies on our economy and on our political and diplomatic relations" (Schulz, 1981). Schulz also notes that the commission's activities led to the establishment of the National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies, as well as a consortium of twelve foreign language professional organizations including AATF (American Association of Teachers of French), AATG (American Association of Teachers of German), ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages), and AATSP (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese).

All the above-mentioned improvements are viewed favorably by Schulz but there is a concern which pervades the article that nothing will be permanent unless "we make language teaching the priority in our departments... we make intensive or immersion programs available as regular curricular options...we develop and use a common standard of proficiency assessment in the spoken and written language" (Schulz, 1981, p. 2).

When this article was written immersion programs were not as readily available as they are now; that particular situation has improved somewhat. However, our country still lags far behind most other highly industrialized nations in our level of national foreign language competency. All of us must adopt Renate Schulz's vigilance to make sure that we continue to make headway, and that we do not continue to be linguistically and culturally

illiterate as a nation.

An article entitled America....Globally Blind, Deaf and Dumb: A Shocking Report of Our Incompetence, through Ignorance in Dealing with Other Countries, written by Joseph Lurie of the American Field Service, describes what happens when the original changes effected by Perkins' report are not followed up. Lurie's report was written in 1982, a year after Schulz's report, and three years after the Perkins article. The observations, many of which are still startlingly accurate today, are shocking:

> Most area specialist officers in the Executive Branch, including the intelligent services, do not and usually cannot, read the materials of greatest concern to them in the original and cannot converse with their foreign counterparts beyond pleasantries in the other language (Lurie, 1982, p. 414).

The author also observed that "it is estimated that of last year's high school graduates, fewer than 2 percent were fluent in a second language" (Lurie, 1982, p. 414), and "only 7 percent of 3,000 American students surveyed thought they were sufficiently competent to understand a native speaker talking slowly and carefully" (Lurie, 1982, p. 415). How should a foreign language instructor react when he or she sees such data? We must ensure that the students passing through our doors are not only sufficiently prepared to speak, read, write, and comprehend the target language, but that they are also engaged and satisfied learners. Only in this way can we be assured of

their success and subsequent continuance with the language.

Certainly the authors of the three preceding articles realized that proficiency in a foreign language isn't all that Americans need to communicate with the world. Also essential to global communication is a sense of the culture of the target language. Without this "enculturation," language teaching is truly incomplete.

Myriam Met's article Teaching Language and Culture: A View from the Schools, discusses this dilemma "Because foreign language students have little practice in interpreting levels of politeness at the comprehension level, they are unlikely to be able to knowingly express such distinctions themselves" (Met, 1992, p. 266). As many of us realize, knowing how to be polite and respectful in some areas of the world can make all the difference in sealing a business deal or a peace accord. Met suggests that teachers choose among a repertoire of classroom communicative tasks which may involve competing priorities. However, the author feels that culture, no matter how they get it, is indispensable to the students.

Another article, written by Sandra Savignon of the University of Illinois, renders the importance of not viewing foreign language as just encompassing the elements of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Like Met, who believed that culture needs to accompany the grammar, Savignon states that language learning includes a myriad of elements, as reflected in the title of her article, Language, Communication, Social Meaning, and Social Change: The Challenge for Teachers. This article

implies that foreign language should not be taught as if its learners lived in a vacuum, but, rather, in the real, living context of a world which is constantly in flux. In a world such as this grammatical accuracy is not the most important issue, but, rather, is the ability to communicate in the manner appropriate to the culture of the target language. Savignon said it best in her conclusion. "Language is communication, communication rich with social meaning. Program development, teacher education, and program evaluation should begin with an understanding of language as communication, language as culture" (Savignon, 1992, p. 104).

Along with the theme of teaching foreign languages for a changing, dynamic world is an article by Wilga M. Rivers about internationalizing foreign language departments at the university level: Internationalization of the University: Where are the Foreign Languages? Rivers states that "expanding the curriculum or permeating it to encompass a global perspective is a campus-wide responsibility" (Rivers, 1992, p. 184).

Some ways to reach the goal of the international university is that the foreign language faculty may assist professors of other subjects by "providing tutorial sections where language material related to the topic or culturally determined aspects of professional behavior are elucidated and discussed" (Rivers, 1992, p. 184). After all, according to Rivers the use of foreign languages are needed if internationalization of the university curriculum "is to provide students with more than an outsider's monocultural view of the affairs, perspectives, and achievements

of other national or cultural groups" (Rivers, 1992, p. 186). Since foreign language is such an indisputable component of any international curriculum, the author asserts strongly that foreign language faculty must be centrally involved in the process.

Internationalizing the curriculum is not only a trend at the university level, but has been occurring at the elementary level as well. Languages and Children-Making the Match: Foreign Language Instruction in the Elementary School, is a book by Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Pesola which discusses the importance of exposing elementary school children to foreign languages and cultures.

The authors of this book assert not only the need for American children to catch up with the children of most other countries in terms of foreign language instruction, but they also take into account some special characteristics of languages at the elementary school level: "When language learning begins earlier, it can go on longer and provide more practice and experience, leading ultimately to greater fluency and effectiveness" (Curtain & Pesola, 1988, p. 3). Also, and just as important is when the authors assert that the age of ten is a crucial time in the development of attitudes toward nations and groups perceived as "other."

The awareness of a global community can be enhanced when children have the opportunity to experience involvement with another culture through a foreign language" (Curtain & Pesola, 1988, p. 4). Thus, in order for our nation to achieve global

understanding with other cultures, it is imperative that the internationalization of the curriculum begin at the youngest age possible.

Alice Omaggio's book entitled Teaching Language in Context: Proficiency-Oriented Instruction, is a general handbook for the foreign language instructor at any level. It includes principles on methodology, on developing oral proficiency, on classroom testing, on the accuracy issue, and on planning instruction for the proficiency-oriented classroom. The impetus of the book seems to stem from Omaggio's view of America as "The Land of the Monolingual," which she describes in chapter nine. The author expresses "Americanization" as an attitude which "represents an extreme ethnocentric world view in which our society is viewed as superior to all others, and foreign nationals are regarded as "underdeveloped" (Omaggio, 1986, p. 357). This attitude, combined with an extreme aversion towards learning foreign languages, is seen by Omaggio as counter-productive.

Another article by Sandra Savignon describes a possible "secret weapon" to counter the above-mentioned sentiment: this is language instruction which is communicative, makes learning a language more authentic and enjoyable. The article, Communicative Language Teaching: Definitions and Directions, expresses communicative competence as requiring "not only grammatical, but discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence" (Savignon, 1990, p. 207). The communicative approach has yet to be fully exploited by instructors. According

to Savignon, reliance on older methods such as the grammatical and audio-lingual approaches, keep both instructors and students in a time-warp. Savignon urges teachers to investigate the communicative approach, and to "participate in the interpretation of findings for materials and classroom practice" (Savignon, 1990, p. 216).

The last article which I reviewed is one by Thomas J. Garza of George Mason University; the article, What You See is What You Get...Or is it?: Bringing Cultural Literacy into the Foreign Language Classroom Through Video, completes the picture of true foreign language learning with the final piece of the puzzle: the cultural dimension. According to Garza "the consensus of language specialists seems to be focusing on the necessity to teach (and learn!) foreign language skills and relevant cultural content together as one holistic domain" (Garza, 1990, p. 285).

The author emphasizes that visually perceived facts become the personal experience of the student, and that this experience is paramount to developing cultural understanding. Most effective in delivering this cultural addition to the foreign language student's course of study are authentic video materials, "prepared by native speakers of a language for other native speakers, and expressly not for learners of that language" (Garza, 1990, p. 288). The benefits of this approach are clear: students are not only receiving full cultural immersion with authentic materials, but they are also being exposed to the target language as it naturally occurs.

Hypothesis

After having immersed myself in the literature, I can come away with full confidence in my belief that foreign language instruction is of benefit to every citizen of this country, and to our national security as a whole. I am tempted to ask questions such as the following:

a) Should we as a nation attempt a foreign language education for each and every child beginning in grades 3 or four and continuing throughout high school like they do in most of the rest of the world?

b) Would this early language education produce longer-lasting results than the ones we are presently familiar with?

c) If every child in America were taught a foreign language early in life, would that also make us more competitive in business and international affairs?

d) Would other countries view us differently if we Americans were all more proficient in foreign languages and global issues?

These questions lead me to question the fact why community college students are taking foreign language classes in two year colleges and not sooner. Is it because they wished to, but there were no FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary School) programs available in their area, and the high school programs were insufficient? Many of the students who I surveyed expressed a desire for both early language learning and greater cultural awareness by Americans. I believe, therefore, that the answer to the question - <u>What factors (external/internal)</u>

motivate students at the community college level to study a foreign language? - could possibly be that community college students are taking foreign language classes because they believe in the necessity for Americans to become less monolingual and monocultural. This hypothesis will become more defined after we review the result section of the research.

Research Methods

This research project began with a simple question of why my community college students are in my class to begin with. As a full-time doctoral student in higher education at the Claremont Graduate School, I took the job at Chaffey Community College partly to pay my way through school, partly because I enjoy teaching adults. The enthusiasm and genuine desire to learn which I found amongst my students started me to thinking about how interesting it would be if I could conduct a survey about their original intentions for enrolling in a foreign language class. As such, I was also concurrently enrolled in a Quantitative Analysis II class, which required the completion of a research study on a subject of my choice, and so I was on my way!

Sampling Procedures

I decided that my sampling plan should have at least 50 subjects, all of which would be current community college students at my institution. I decided on a random sample of six foreign language classes (German and Spanish) on the Chaffey campus. The classes ranged from elementary (German I) to advanced (Spanish IV); also included were a conversation class and a

literature class. I thought that the varied responses from different levels and different languages would give me a random, non-biased sample of the typical community college student presently enrolled in a foreign language class.

Questionnaire Construction

My questionnaire was composed of a total of 24 variables. Since mine is a study about what motivates community college students to take a foreign language, my key question was also my first: "Why did you decide to study a foreign language?" Flowing out of that question are others which further aid to gauge the student's feelings about the language class in which he or she is enrolled: "Do you enjoy the language(s) you are now studying?" "Would you recommend your present foreign language class(es) to a friend?" "How would you rate the quality of the foreign language program at your college?" "How would you rate your present foreign language teacher?" "What kinds of changes do you feel would benefit the existing foreign language program at your college?"

The next set of key variables revolved around what the foreign language experience is like for each individual student; this included questions concerning the difficulty of the language for students, outcomes associated with a foreign language, study-abroad options, world peace, and early childhood language education. For example: "Is learning a foreign language difficult for you?" "Metaphorically, what is learning a foreign language to you?" "What kinds of outcomes do you associate with learning a foreign language?" "If you could suggest one thing about

foreign language education to the President of the United States, what would it be?"

Concluding items in the survey asked for gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, occupation, class year, and major. It is interesting to see how respondents line up according to gender or occupation in response to the question of why they are taking a foreign language. For a copy of the survey please see the appendix. To see the results of the study, please read on.

Survey Procedures

As already mentioned, I surveyed six foreign language classes at Chaffey Community College. The classes were as follows: German I, German I, German 3/4, German Conversation, German Literature After World War II, and Spanish 4. I distributed the surveys myself in four out of the six classes. With the instructor's prior approval, I would walk into the classroom, surveys in hand, and briefly introduce myself and the project. Then I'd hand out the questionnaires, give the students approximately fifteen minutes, collect the surveys, thank the students, and leave. I found that the average student was finished in ten minutes. Students whose native language was not English would typically require more time, although no student exceeded twenty minutes. As a whole, I found that the students in the classes I visited were very enthusiastic about the surveys, wanted to see the finished product, and were excited about the fact that I wanted to publish the results.

Two of the six classes surveyed met on days on which I

could not attend their class. Thus, my colleague Gail Theurer distributed the surveys in her German Conversation class, and her German Literature class. I did not survey my own class, German II, for fear that the results might have become too biased, since my students might have answered in a certain way to please me. I need not feel the loss of survey respondents, however, since the six classes gave me a total of 61 responses. I am also very glad to have had "captive audiences," since I had a 100% response rate, and did not have to wait on pins and needles for surveys to come back through the mail.

Results Section

After I received all the surveys back I did the basics: I made up a coding guide, translated all the responses onto a data sheet, and then programmed all the relevant information into the computer, using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The SPSS program was wonderfully simple, and I had a good time playing with the data. I ran several different statistics; the rest of this section will briefly describe the statistics I ran, what the findings were, and what they could mean.

My statistical odyssey began with descriptive statistics; I ran frequency distributions on what I considered to be the most important (15) of my numeric variables, since I found the computer could not run tests on string variables This was not a problem, however, since only six out of my total 37 variables were of the string variety. The variables for which I have frequency distributions, and the data pertaining to them

follow below.

1) Reason for Studying a Foreign Language (Major): Yes/No Question (Yes = 1, No = 2): Out of the 61 students polled 19 (31.1%) responded that they were taking a foreign language because it was their major, and 41 (67.2%) responded that they were not taking it because it was their major. One student chose not to respond. The mean was 1.68 and the standard deviation was .47. What does it mean? More than half of those polled are taking a foreign language for a reason other than because it is their major.

2) Reason for Studying a Foreign Language (Pleasure): Yes/No Question (Yes = 1, No = 2): Out of 61 students polled 33 (54.1%) responded that they were taking a foreign language for pleasure, and 28 (45.9%) responded that they were not taking it for pleasure. The mean was 1.46 and the standard deviation was .50. What does it mean? Half of those polled are taking a foreign language for pleasure.

3) Reason for Studying a Foreign Language (Job Market): Yes/No Question (Yes = 1, No = 2): Out of 61 students polled 16 (26.2%) responded that they were taking a foreign language to be more attractive on the job market, and 45 (73.8%) responded that they were not taking a foreign language to be more attractive on the job market. The mean was 1.74 and the standard deviation was .44. What does it mean? Almost three quarters of those polled are not taking a foreign language to be more attractive on the job market.

4) Reason for Studying a Foreign Language (Job Advancement):

Yes/No Question (Yes = 1, No = 2): Out of 61 students polled 9 (14.8%) responded that they were taking a foreign language for job advancement, and 52 (85.2%) students responded that they were not taking a foreign language for job advancement. The mean was 1.85 and the standard deviation was .36. What does it mean? More than 85% of the students stated that they were not in the foreign language class because of interest in job advancement.

5) Reason for Studying a Foreign Language (To Make a Difference in the World): Yes/No Question (Yes = 1, No = 2): Out of 61 students polled 18 (29.5%) responded that they were taking a foreign language to make a difference in the world, and 43 (70.5%) responded that they were not taking a foreign language to make a difference. The mean was 1.71 and the standard deviation was .46. What does it mean? More than 70% of the students are not taking a foreign language to make a difference.

6) Enjoyment of the Foreign Language: Yes/No/Not Sure Question (Yes = 1, No = 2, Not Sure = 3): Out of 61 students polled 58 (95.1%) responded that they were taking a foreign language because they enjoyed it, whereas 3 (4.9%) students were not sure. None of the students polled indicated that they did not enjoy the language they were studying. The mean was 1.00 and the standard deviation was .000. What does it mean? An overwhelming percentage of the students polled enjoy learning foreign languages, and are taking the class because they enjoy it.

7) Recommending the Foreign Language: Yes/No/Not Sure

Question: Out of 61 students polled 58 (95.1%) indicated that they would recommend their present foreign language class to a friend, and 3 (4.9%) indicated that they were not sure. None of the students responded in the negative. The mean was 1.00 and the standard deviation was .000. What does it mean? More than 95% of those polled are satisfied enough with their foreign language classes to recommend them to a friend.

8) Rating the Foreign Language Teacher: Excellent/Very Good/Good/Fair/Poor Question: Of 61 students polled, one chose not to respond to this question. 40 (65.6%) students considered their teachers to be excellent, 13 (21.3%) considered their teachers to be very good, 4 (6.6%) considered their teachers to be good, and 3 (1.6%) considered their teachers to be fair. None of those polled considered their teachers to be poor. The mean was 1.500 and the standard deviation was .83. What does this mean? On the whole, students seem to be satisfied with the quality of foreign language instruction.

9) Difficulty of the Foreign Language: Yes, very difficult/ Yes, difficult , but I enjoy it/ Not hard, but I have to study/ No, its a breeze/ Not sure Question: Out of 61 students polled one student chose not to respond. 3 students (4.9%) responded in the first category, 31 students (50.8%) responded in the second category, 22 students (36.1%) responded in the third category, 4 students (6.6 %) responded in the fourth category. None of those polled checked the Not Sure category. The mean was 2.45 and the standard deviation was .70. What does it mean? More than half of the students (50.8%) consider a foreign

language to be difficult, but they enjoy it. Only a very small minority consider it to be extremely difficult.

10) Foreign Language Outcomes (More Money): Yes/No Question: Out of 61 students polled 11 (18 %) considered the money they could make with knowing a foreign language an important outcome related to the foreign language experience. 50 (82%) considered money to be inconsequential. The mean was 1.82 and the standard deviation was .39. What does it mean? The vast majority of foreign language students at the community colleges are not taking a foreign language strictly to earn more money.

11) Foreign Language Outcomes (Prestige): Yes/No Question: Out of 61 students polled 19 (31.1%) reported that they associated prestige with learning a foreign language, while 42 students (68.9%) did not. The mean was 1.70 and the standard deviation was .47. What does it mean? Almost 70% of those polled report that they are taking a foreign language for a reason other than the prestige which comes with being bilingual.

12) Foreign Language Outcomes (Personal Fulfillment): Yes/No Question: Out of 61 students polled, 56 (91.8%) responded that personal fulfillment was an important thing which they associated with foreign language learning. 5 (8.2%) of the students considered personal fulfillment unimportant. The mean was 1.08 and the standard deviation was .28. What does it mean? Students consider more than money and prestige when studying a foreign language.

13) Every Child Should Study a Foreign Language: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/No Opinion Question: Out of 61 students polled, 32 (52.5%) students strongly agreed that every U.S. child should study a foreign language. 19 students (31.1%) agreed, and 4 (6.6%) students disagreed, while 6 students (9.8%) had no opinion. The mean was 1.51 and the standard deviation was .63. What does it mean? Over 70% of those polled agreed with the concept of early foreign language learning for American children.

14) Study/Work Abroad in Connection with a Foreign Language: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/No Opinion Question: Out of 61 students polled, 27 (44.3%) strongly agreed that they would study or work abroad in connection with a foreign language if they were given the chance. 25 students (41%) indicated that they agreed, 3 students (1%) said that they disagreed, and 8 students (13.1%) said that they had no opinion. There were no students who strongly disagreed. The mean was 1.51 and the standard deviation was .54. What does it mean? An overwhelming majority of students (over 80%) would study

or work abroad in connection with the foreign language which they are presently studying.

15) If More People Learned a Foreign Language There Would be Less War: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/No Opinion Question: Out of 61 students polled 14 (23%) strongly agreed with the statement, 21 (34%) agreed, 15 (24.6%) disagreed, 3 (4.9%) strongly disagreed, and 8 (13.1%) had no opinion. The mean was 2.13 and the standard deviation was .88. What does it mean? More than half of the students believed that there would be less war if more people learned a foreign language.

Among the other descriptive statistics which I ran on my data were some pies, some simple bar graphs, and some histograms. When I ran these statistics I used other variables besides the fifteen discussed above. Some of these other variables are important variables such as ethnicity, age, gender, and marital status. The findings are worth mentioning and shall be discussed in the following paragraph.

The pies, bar graphs and histograms all contain exactly the same data, and so the results are identical. More than half of the students taking a foreign language at Chaffey Community College are female; the vast majority of students are between the ages of 20 and 29; roughly half the students are Anglo, and the other significant number of students (about a quarter) are Hispanic; more than half the students are single, and about a quarter are married; about two thirds of students are in their freshman year of community college, and another two thirds are in their sophomore year; about eighty percent of students polled

would either agree or strongly agree with studying or working abroad in connection with the language they are studying.

More than half the students believe that foreign language study can help promote world peace; finally, when asked if they enjoyed the foreign language they were studying, all those who responded answered "yes," adding up to about 95% - there were no "no" responses. This concludes the data in the pies, bars and graphs; to view these items please see the appendix.

The last group of statistics which I ran were correlations. Needless to say, there were many more correlations run which were not significant than those that actually were. However, I was pleased that eight of the correlations were significant. Of these eight correlations, only one includes a pair were one of the variables was not one of the fifteen variables mentioned above in the frequency distributions. This should be of no big consequence, however. A description of the significant correlations (from weakest association to strongest) will follow in the next paragraph.

1) The first significant correlation which I came across in my research was the association between studying a foreign language for the outcome of money and studying a foreign language for the reason of pleasure. Pearson's R was .008; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak association, however, since the correlation value is below .3 (-.3381). What does it mean? Students who take a foreign language because they want to earn more money in the future also receive pleasure from the language. This association is significant, although

it is weak.

2) The second significant correlation was that between studying a foreign language for the outcome of money and studying a foreign language for a reason other than major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and making a difference in the world. Pearson's R was .017; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak association, however, since the correlation value is below .3 (-.3042). What does it mean? Students taking a foreign language because they want to earn money in the future are also taking the language for other reasons (as opposed to major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and to make a difference in the world). This association is significant, although it is weak.

3) The third significant correlation was that between studying a foreign language for the outcome of prestige and that of studying a foreign language for reasons other than major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and to make a difference in the world. Pearson's R was .34; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak association, however, since the correlation value is below .3 (-.2726). What does it mean? Students who are taking a foreign language because they wish the prestige associated with speaking more than one language are also taking a language for other reasons (as opposed to major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and to make a difference in the world). This association is significant, although it is weak.

4) The fourth significant correlation was that between

studying a foreign language for outcomes other than money, prestige, and personal fulfillment and studying a foreign language for reasons other than major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and to make a difference in the world. Pearson's R was .019; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak association, however, since the correlation value is below .3 (.2989). What does it mean? Students who are taking a foreign language because of outcomes other than money, prestige, and personal fulfillment, are also taking the language for other reasons (opposed to major, pleasure, job market, job advancement, and to make a difference in the world). This association is significant, although it is weak.

5) The fifth significant correlation was that between studying a foreign language for the outcome of prestige and studying a foreign language for job advancement. Pearson's R was .012; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak to moderate association since the correlation value is slightly above .3 (.3191). What does it mean? Students who are taking a foreign language for the outcome of prestige are also taking a language because they wish for job advancement.

6) The sixth significant correlation was that between the belief that foreign language study can help promote world peace and studying a foreign language to make a difference in the world. Person's R was .014; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak to moderate association since the correlation value is slightly above .3 (.3368). What does it mean? Students who believe that foreign language study can help

promote world peace, are also taking a foreign language to make a difference in the world.

7) The seventh significant correlation was that between studying a foreign language for outcomes other than money, prestige, and personal fulfillment and studying a foreign language to make a difference in the world. Pearson's R was .004; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a weak to moderate association since the correlation value is slightly above .3 (.3655). What does it mean? Students studying a foreign language for outcomes other than money, prestige, and personal fulfillment, are also taking a foreign language to make a difference in the world.

8) The eighth significant correlation was that between studying a foreign language for the outcome of money and studying a foreign language for the reason of job advancement. Pearson's R was .001; since this figure is below .05 it is significant. It is a moderate correlation since the correlation value is between .3 and .7 (.4060). What does it mean? Students studying a foreign language for the outcome of money are also taking a foreign language for job advancement.

Discussion and Conclusions

At the beginning of the paper, as well as in the hypothesis section, I posed the research question of "What factors (external/internal) motivate students at the community college level to study a foreign language?" One could probably answer that question in a myriad of different ways. My hypothesis, however, was based on the comments which students had made to

me before and after filling out the questionnaires; they mentioned things such as: "I wish that we could study foreign languages here in Elementary School," or "I think that foreign languages ought to be made mandatory in schools like math and English are."

These verbal sentiments, along with answers to question number 16 on my survey ("If you could suggest one thing about foreign language education to the President of the United States, what would it be?") suggested to me that community college students are very much aware of the inadequate role which foreign languages play in American society as a whole. Some of the answers to number 16 brought that point home: "Foreign Language enhances education;" "Require it!;" "Foreign Language should start in pre-school."

My hypothesis followed right along with those sentiments; I believed that community college students were taking foreign language classes because of their desire for Americans to become less monolingual and less monocultural. Did my research findings substantiate this belief? On the whole, yes!

I found my data results to mean the following: The community college students who I polled were much more likely to take a foreign language class for pleasure than for either their major, a future job, or for job advancement. Despite the acknowledged difficulty of foreign languages the students were on the whole very happy with their foreign language experience, and most said they would recommend their present class to a friend. As of the outcomes which they associated with a foreign

language, students rated personal fulfillment much higher than money or prestige.

An overwhelming majority of those polled believed that every child should study a foreign language in elementary school, and they also believed that foreign languages could help promote world peace. Students also seemed to view themselves as making a difference in the world by being able to speak a foreign language. I was pleasantly surprised by the general emphasis on enjoyment of the language and making a difference in the world over money and prestige.

Students did acknowledge the fact that the prestige of being bilingual would bring them possible job advancement, but most of the responses proved true to my hypothesis: because students place an emphasis on being multicultural and multilingual, they view issues such as pleasure with the foreign language, making a difference in the world through foreign language, early language education, and Americans studying abroad, as basic core issues which need to be addressed in order to make our society more "culture friendly."

If we are to change gears and drive away from the linguistic and cultural national disasters made light of in the Perkins report, as well as in the Schulz and Lurie articles, we must listen to the voices of our students. They desire to learn a language other than English, they desire to become fluent in other cultures, and, most importantly, they are serious about it. If they were not earnest in their beliefs, I don't think I would have seen such overwhelming support for the foreign

language classes as I did. These community college students may enjoy their classes, but the good experiences must continue if we are to retain students. For me, this is the single most important task which I have as a foreign language instructor.

My recommendations for future research is to continue to ask students - students of all levels - what their perceptions of the language programs are. Many foreign language research projects in the past have failed to address our clients - the students - and have not asked for their opinions, their concerns, their hopes for future foreign language uses. In a future study I hope to poll community college students from all over California who are presently enrolled in foreign language classes to see if the state-wide results will be similar to those of the Chaffey College students.

Of course, there is always a remote possibility that the Chaffey responses were just an aberration, but I don't think so. I feel that the students I polled are representative of a larger population of American citizens who desire to compete along with the rest of the world in foreign language and cultural competency. Perhaps these students know all too well that in this interconnected post-cold war world in which we live no nation, least alone a superpower, can afford the luxury of cultural isolation.

References

Curtain, H. A. & Pesola, C. A. (1988). Languages and children - Making the match: Foreign language instruction in the elementary school. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Engles, L. K. (1973). Linguistic versus psycholinguistic models in teaching foreign languages to university students. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1973, 1-9.

Garza, T. J. (1990). What you see is what you get...Or is it? Bringing cultural literacy into the foreign language classroom through video. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1990, 285-292.

Heath, S. B. ((1978). Bilingual education and a national language policy. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1978, 53-66.

Irvine, J. T. (1982). Language and affect: Some cross-cultural issues. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1982, 31-47.

Kuehlwein, W. (1973). Some social implications of language study. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1973, 19-25.

Lurie, J. (1982). America....Globally blind, deaf and dumb: A shocking report of our incompetence, through ignorance in dealing with other countries. Foreign Language Annals, 15(6), 413-419.

McKinnon, M. (1992). Common ground: Practical ideas to promote interdisciplinary cooperation between social studies and second language instructors. New York: Goethe House, New York.

Met, M. (1992). Teaching language and culture: A view from the schools. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1992, 259-274.

Omaggio, A. C. (1986). Teaching language in context: Proficiency-oriented instruction. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc.

Perkins, J. A. (1979). Report of the President's commission on foreign language and international studies. Foreign Language Annals, 12, 457-464.

Rivers, W. M. (1988). Interactive language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, W. M. (1992). Internationalization of the university: Where are the foreign languages. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1992, 179-198.

Savignon, S. J. (1990). Communicative language teaching: Definitions and directions. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1990, 207-217.

Savignon, S. J. (1992). Language, communication, social meaning, and social change. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1992, 104-116.

Schulz, R. A. (1981). Searching for life after death: In the aftermath of the president's commission on foreign language

and international studies. ADFL Bulletin, 13(1), 16.

Swain, M. (1978). Bilingual education for the English-speaking Canadian. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1978, 141-154.

Szalay, L. B. (1982). Psychological meanings: How much we share, how much we differ culturally. Georgetown University Round table on Languages and Linguistics, 1982, 79-100.

Appendix

Iris Dolores Thot
November 1, 1995

Why do Community College Students take Foreign Languages?

Instructions: Please check one only except when otherwise indicated.

1. Why did you decide to study a foreign language? (Check all that apply)

( ) I needed it for my major

( ) For pleasure/travel

( ) To make me more attractive on the job market

( ) For job advancement

( ) To make a difference in the world

( ) Other (Please Specify) _____

	Yes	No	Not Sure
2. Do you enjoy the language(s) you are now studying?	( )	( )	( )
3. Would you recommend your present foreign language class(es) to a friend?	( )	( )	( )

4. In which foreign language class(es) are you currently enrolled? _____

(For numbers 5 - 8, the following codes are used: Ex = Excellent, VG = Very Good, Gd = Good, Fr = Fair, Pr = Poor)

Please note: If you are taking more than one foreign language class this semester, please skip to question 8.

	Ex	VG	Gd	Fr	Pr
5. How would you rate the quality of the foreign language program at your college?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. How would you rate your present foreign language teacher?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. How would you rate the text which you are using in your foreign language class?	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of the audio program in the language lab?

Ex	VG	Gd	Fr	Pr
( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

9. What kinds of changes do you feel would benefit the existing foreign language program at your college?

_____

_____

10. Is learning a foreign language difficult for you?

( ) Yes, extremely so

( ) Yes, but I enjoy it.

( ) It's not hard, but I still have to study a lot.

( ) No; it's a breeze!

( ) Not sure

11. Metaphorically, what is learning a foreign language to you?

Example: Learning a foreign language is like:
learning math.

Learning a foreign language is like:

_____

12. What kinds of outcomes do you associate with learning a foreign language?
(Check all which apply)

( ) More money, since it can help me with my job

( ) Prestige, since I will be able to compete on an international level

( ) Personal fulfillment, since I will be able to speak and communicate better with people from other countries

( ) Other (Please Specify) _____

(For numbers 13 - 16, the following codes are used:
SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Disagree,NO = No Opinion)

13. I would study/work abroad in conjunction with the

	SA	A	D	SD	NO
language(s) I am studying if the opportunity presented itself.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
14. I feel that if everyone in the world knew how to speak at least one other language there would be less war and conflict.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
15. I feel that every American school child should study a foreign language beginning in elementary school like they do in Europe and Asia.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

16. If you could suggest one thing about foreign language education to the President of the United States, what would it be?

_____

_____

17. What is your gender?

( ) Male ( ) Female

18. What is your age?

( ) 20 or younger ( ) 21 - 29 ( ) 30 - 45 ( ) 46 - 65

( ) Over 65

19. What is your ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

( ) African American/Black ( ) Anglo/White

( ) Asian American/Pacific Islander ( ) Hispanic/Latino

( ) Native American/American Indian ( ) Other _____

20. With which ethnicity do you most identify? (Please check only one)

( ) African American/Black ( ) Anglo/White

( ) Asian American/Pacific Islander ( ) Hispanic/Latino

( ) Native American/American Indian ( ) Other _____

21. What is your current marital status?

( ) Divorced ( ) Married ( ) Single, Never been married

( ) Separated ( ) Widowed

22. What is your occupation?

_____

23. What is your class year?

( ) Freshman ( ) Sophomore ( ) Junior ( ) Senior ( ) Graduate

( ) Other (Please specify) _____

24. What is your major?

_____

Thank you very much!
Muchas Gracias!
Vielen Dank!